

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 882

By DeBerry J

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Earl D. Edwards for his many accomplishments and meritorious service.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens, who through their personal and professional efforts, have distinguished themselves as Christian leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable person is Dr. Earl Edwards, who has served with dedication and diligence as a spiritual leader and peerless educator in the Church of Christ community; and

WHEREAS, a Missouri native, Earl Edwards lived and worked on his family farm until the age of eighteen, when he began attending college; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Edwards first attended what is now Oklahoma Christian University of Sciences and Arts (OCUSA); he transferred to and finished his bachelor's degree work at Lipscomb University in 1956, and he furthered his education at Harding Graduate School, where he received his Masters of Theology in Bible and Missions in 1983, and earned his Doctor of Missiology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 1985; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Earl Edwards shepherded the flock at Pleasant Valley Church in Wichita, Kansas, from 1957 until 1960, when he and his wife went to Italy to serve as missionaries; and

WHEREAS, answering the Lord's call in Matthew 28:19-20, to "go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations in my name, teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you," Dr. Edwards served in the missionary field in Italy for sixteen years and has led numerous mission trips to nations around the world, including Canada, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, Hungary, Slovakia, New Zealand, Russia, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Albania; he also

preaches in numerous meetings, seminars, and lectureships each year throughout the United States and in various foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, during the last twelve years of his tenure in Italy, Earl Edwards held meetings throughout the country and performed in administrative roles, including serving as Dean, directing the Florence Bible School, and authoring the school's curriculum; and

WHEREAS, after returning to the United States, Earl Edwards taught for one year in the Bible department at Harding University before serving as a local evangelist for five years and an elder for two years at the Church of Christ in Wynne, Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Dr. Edwards began his esteemed tenure at Freed-Hardeman University, where he has earned the respect of his fellow faculty members and students alike for his peerless service to the university and the greater Henderson community; and

WHEREAS, during his remarkable term at Freed-Hardeman University, Dr. Earl Edwards served with great distinction as the Director of Mission Studies, the first Dean of the School of Biblical Studies, and as the Director of Graduate Studies in Bible, in addition to rendering sterling service as one of the evangelists at the Finger, Tennessee, Church of Christ, where he also served as an elder since 1999; and

WHEREAS, a prolific author, Dr. Edwards has penned many articles for the *Spiritual Sword*, the *Gospel Advocate*, and other quarterlies and periodicals, in addition to chapters in various lectureship books and a paper published among the Italian Churches of Christ; in 2007, he published a book, *Protecting Our Blind Side*, which deals with various contemporary concerns in the Churches of Christ, and has the singular distinction of authoring three graduate Bible programs; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Earl Edwards is the recipient of many prestigious awards and has been honored as the 1998 Alumnus of the Year by the School of Biblical Studies at OCUSA, was included in the *Great Preachers Living History* video series produced by the World Video Bible School, and was recognized at the Honor to Whom Honor is Due Dinner at the annual Ft. Worth Lectureship in 1999 and at the Annual Appreciation Dinner at the Freed-Hardeman Lectureship in 2004; and

WHEREAS, at Freed-Hardeman University, he was named the 1986 Teacher of the Year and was voted the Distinguished Faculty Award in 1990 by the Alumni Association and Distinguished Professor by the Board of Trustees in 1999; and

WHEREAS, an articulate and eloquent communicator who possesses a rare ability to answer complex theological questions with clarity, Dr. Edwards broadcasted his love for God across the country by ministering on the radio six days a week for five years in Wynne, Arkansas, was a featured speaker on a weekly television program in Wichita, Kansas, for four years, and was one of six panelists in the nation-wide *One Nation Under God* telecasts in 1991, in addition to eloquently and masterfully discussing theology in various debates; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Earl Edwards epitomizes the indomitable spirit and steadfast commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, he is deeply devoted to his family and always endeavors to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Edwards is very thankful for the partnership in ministry that he shared with his late wife of thirty-three years, Gwendolyn Hall, and is immensely blessed that God opened his heart to love again with his wife, Lora, with whom he has been married for twenty years; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Dr. Edwards is most appreciative of the love and support he receives from his family, which in addition to his wife, includes his son, Terry and his wife, Kim; his daughter, Karen and her husband, Dan Drew, and his eight grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Edwards's unparalleled courage, boundless energy, and religious devotion are the benchmarks of humble Christian service; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Dr. Earl D. Edwards for his dedication to the Church of Christ, Freed-Hardeman University, and the State of Tennessee and its citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we honor Dr. Earl D. Edwards for his devoted service to Christian ministry and extend to him our best wishes for every future success in all of his endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.